



Method Statement: Mobile Protected and Priority Species

This Method Statement has been updated to incorporate the specific ecological data from the Crossman Ecology Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment (March 2026) for the site at Land Charrington Way, Broadbridge Heath.

Site: Charrington Way Recreation Area, Broadbridge Heath

Client: Broadbridge Parish Council

Document ref: CW10BMSPS

Revision: Initial issue 27.03.2026

1. Introduction and Site Baseline

The site covers approximately 0.4478 hectares of public parkland. The baseline habitat is dominated by modified grassland in moderate condition, currently subject to regular mowing and frequent disturbance from recreational activities. While the sward is currently species-poor, the site contains 27 existing trees (including Field Maple, Pedunculate Oak, and Hornbeam) and areas of hardstanding (paths and play areas) that require precautionary measures during the construction phase which are detailed in the tree protection method statement.

2. Species-Specific Mitigation Measures

A. Reptiles and Amphibians (Hardstanding & Grassland)

Although the grassland is regularly mown, the site's hardstanding and recreational debris can provide refugia for mobile species.

Hardstanding Removal: The existing circular and square surfaced areas shall be dismantled with care. Sections must be broken and lifted rather than crushed in situ to ensure any sheltering reptiles can be identified and allowed to move to safety.

Grassland Maintenance: To prevent the site from becoming more attractive to reptiles prior to commencement, the modified grassland must continue to be mown regularly to a short sward (under 50mm) areas where excavations are needed will be 'scalped' for 6 weeks prior to work.

Timing: Groundworks should ideally occur between March and October when reptiles are active and able to relocate independently.

B. Nesting Birds and Arboricultural Protection

The development retains all 27 existing trees on-site.

Protection Zones: To protect nesting birds and tree root systems, no construction materials or machinery shall be stored within the canopy drip-line of retained trees-see tree protection method statement.

Seasonal Constraints: Any minor scrub clearance must occur outside the nesting season (March to August). If works are necessary during this window, a nesting bird check must be performed by a qualified ecologist within 24 hours of start work.

If an active nest is found, all works in the immediate area will be paused until the young have fledged. A buffer zone (typically a minimum of 5 metres) will be clearly marked and maintained around the nest during this period to prevent disturbance.

C. Hedgehogs and [REDACTED]

As the site is part of a larger area of public parkland, it likely serves as a foraging corridor for hedgehogs.

Excavations: There are no deep excavations planned, however any trenches or pits left open overnight must include a mammal ladder (a wooden plank at a 45° angle) to allow animals to escape.

Pipework: All open pipework over 150mm in diameter must be capped at the end of each working day to prevent entrapment.

D. Bats

All work, deliveries and site activities will be undertaken during full daylight hours. No artificial lighting will be used on the site. It is expected that impact to nesting bats and their flight routes will be highly unlikely.

If bat roosting activity is discovered during works all activity in that area will be stopped immediately. A licensed bat ecologist will be contacted to assess the situation.

3. Site Protocol and "Stop Work"

Toolbox Talk: All site personnel will be briefed on the presence of protected species and the attached toolbox talks must be read and understood by all operatives working or visiting the site. The contractor completing the work must ensure a log is kept showing that the toolbox talks have been read by each operative.

Discovery Protocol: Where a species is discovered on site work should stop and the site manager/agent informed. Work can commence once the site manager/agent is satisfied that the species has moved away to an adequate distance. If a protected species is found, all works in the immediate area must cease, and a qualified professional must be contacted for advice.

4. Appended toolbox talks

Feral pigeons	Mink
Birds	Great crested newt
Otter	Foxes
Natterjack toad	Amphibians
Pine marten	Bats
Invasive plants	Reptiles
Water vole	White-clawed crayfish
Rats	Grey squirrels
Mammals	Fish
Red squirrel	Dormice
Invertebrate	

Toolbox talk log

By signing the below, you are acknowledging that you have read and understood the listed toolbox talks and are aware that should any species be found during works the site manager/agent must be informed immediately.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Toolbox talk 18: pest species

Feral pigeons

What are they and how are they recognised?

The feral pigeon was introduced to the UK and is now found in large flocks in urban areas throughout the UK. Pigeons are relatively large birds with a plump body. They are usually bluish-grey with a white rump and darker-coloured wings and often have purple-green patches on neck and breast.

What should be done if there are pigeons on site?

Without a "General Licence", it is illegal to kill, injure or take feral pigeons or destroy their eggs or nest. Pigeon control measures and removal of pigeon droppings should be carried out only by specialist contractors. Pigeon droppings may contain potentially fatal diseases and are classed as controlled waste.

Where are they found?

Feral pigeons are closely associated with humans – they congregate on and in buildings throughout the UK in urban areas and around farms in rural areas. Pigeons build their nests in or on roofs, lofts, building or monument ledges, bridge supports, air conditioning units and window sills. Their nests are not like typical birds nests; instead they comprise a simple platform of twigs, grasses or scraps such as plastic and wire.

When are they found?

Feral pigeons are active all year and nests can be found in any month.

Health and safety issues

Feral pigeons and their droppings can transmit diseases to humans and domestic animals.

Fouling of pathways by feral pigeons can make walkways slippery.



Killing pigeons is unlikely to be effective, as more pigeons quickly move in from neighbouring areas. The most effective deterrent is to remove food sources. Do not provide food and use secure storage for food waste and refuse on site.

Pigeons can be prevented from entering or roosting on buildings by using netting or wire mesh. But note that such actions will be illegal if they affect bats and may also have a detrimental effect on other bird species. Consult an ecologist for advice before blocking access to roofs and buildings.

Pest control methods must be adopted only by a registered pest control company – many methods are subject to legal restrictions and may be illegal if they affect protected species of wildlife. Appropriate permissions may need to be sought before works are allowed to begin.

Do not handle pigeon droppings without wearing protective equipment.

Toolbox talk 4: protected species

Birds

What are they and how are they recognised?

More than 400 bird species are regularly recorded in the UK. These consist of resident breeding species and migrants. Birds occur in both rural and urban areas, with many species adapted to living in bridges, buildings, houses and gardens. Used and unused nests made of twigs, grass and moss, droppings and food pellets or food remains may also be found.

Where are their nests found?

Species show different preferences as to where they nest. Most are more likely to nest in scrub or hedgerows than in trees, but some build nests in or on buildings, ledges, cliffs and on the ground.

When are they found?

Birds in the UK typically build their nests and lay their eggs between March and August. The peak months for breeding are May and June. Exceptions include the barn owl, which may breed for a longer period, and the collared dove and wood pigeon, which nest all year round. However, birds may be found breeding on a construction site at unexpected times of the year.

What should be done if nesting birds are found?

All wild birds are protected by law throughout the UK and in particular when they are nesting. It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest while that nest is in use or being built, or eggs of breeding birds. This includes commonly seen species, such as blackbirds and robins.

Certain birds receive additional protection whereby it is illegal to disturb them when they are nesting (eg barn owl, peregrine falcon, kingfisher, black redstart etc).



If nesting birds are found on site, all works in that area will have to stop until the birds have completed breeding. Nesting sites should be inspected only by experienced ecologists. Works must not damage the nests of breeding birds or be conducted near the nests of those species receiving additional protection.

Birds may nest on machinery or scaffolding and other temporary site structures. If this happens the equipment cannot be used until the birds have finished nesting, and areas may need to be sealed off to prevent disturbance.

Where possible avoid clearance works during the nesting season.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 11: protected species

Otter

What are they and how are they recognised?

Otters have long slender bodies with short legs and a thick tapered tail. Their body is about one metre long and their paws are webbed. They have dark brown fur on the back with a pale underside and their head is flattened with a broad muzzle, small eyes and ears.

Otters swim low in water with only their nose and eyes above water. Their droppings are deposited on rocks and logs along watercourses and are made up of a mass of fish bones and scales, and their footprints are dog-size, webbed with five toes and are about 50 mm across.

Where are they found?

Otters occur in both rural and urban areas, including major cities. They will use any size watercourse. Places where they are found include rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, estuaries, coasts, streams, ponds, bogs, marshes and woodland. Otters may use a variety of places as holts or sheltering places, for instance under tree roots or boulders or old rabbit burrows.

When are they found?

Otters are active all year round – they are nocturnal and cautious, so sightings are rare, but there will be signs of their presence such as droppings, footprints or worn pathways along watercourses. Otter cubs can be born in any month of the year.

What should be done if one is found?

Otters are fully protected against killing, capture, injury and disturbance, and any places they use for shelter or protection (ie holts or dens) are protected against damage, destruction or obstruction. If an otter or its shelter is found on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately to avoid the law being broken.



What else may be seen?

Otters are often confused with mink (which is not protected in the UK). However, mink are much smaller than otter; they have a darker coat and are of slimmer build. Mink tend to swim high in the water, whereas otters swim with most of their body submerged and only the nose, eyes and ears exposed.

In any doubt as to the identity of a species you have found, do not disturb the animals or damage any holes and consult an expert.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 10: protected species

Natterjack toad

What are they and how are they recognised?

Natterjack toads are extremely rare and occur in the UK only on a small number of carefully monitored sites. The natterjack toad has warty skin that is patchy grey-brown to dark olive green in colour with a narrow yellow stripe running along the length of its back (young toadlets also have this stripe), and it has a distinctive metallic sounding croak. The common toad is larger and does not have the yellow stripe.

Where are they found?

The natterjack toad lives in coastal sand dune systems, coastal grazing marshes and lowland heaths, and occasionally can be found on upland moor, salt-marshes and disused ironworks. It occurs in shallow, usually temporary, ponds and also large ponds or small lakes with shallow margins.

When are they found?

Adult natterjack toads can be found in breeding pools from April to August with tadpoles can being found in breeding pools from May to early September. Toadlets are only 7 mm in size when they leave the pools to feed on land. Both adults and juveniles can also be found on land at any time of year. They hibernate underground during the winter months.

What should be done if one is found?

Natterjack toads are fully protected against killing, capture, injury and disturbance, and the places that they use for shelter or protection are protected against damage, destruction or obstruction. If a natterjack toad is found (or suspected) on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately to avoid breaking the law. Without a licence, it is illegal to injure, kill, capture or disturb a natterjack toad, or to damage its sheltering place. Advice must be sought from an experienced ecologist.



If there is any doubt as to the species that has been found, stop work immediately and consult an expert.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 12: protected species

Pine marten

What are they and how are they recognised?

Pine martens are similar in size to a cat but more slender, have dark brown fur with a yellow or white throat patch and a long bushy tail. They are extremely rare, very shy and active mostly at night. The likelihood of spotting one is very low. Droppings are deposited close to dens as cone-shape piles or latrines and are similar to fox droppings, but are very difficult to spot, even by trained experts.

Where are they found?

Pine martens live in large areas of deciduous, mixed or native pine woodland. They are thought to be on the verge of extinction in England and Wales, but still occur throughout Scotland. Some isolated populations still exist in northern England. They shelter and breed in dens on or above ground – including hollow trees, rabbit burrows, rock holes and in scrub. They also use pigeon nests or nest boxes and may use buildings.

When are they found?

Pine martens are active all year round, but mainly nocturnal except during summer. They breed once a year between March and May.

What should be done if a pine marten or its den is found?

It is illegal to injure, kill, capture or disturb a pine marten, or to damage or obstruct its den or other place they use for shelter or protection. If a pine marten or its nesting site is found (or suspected) on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately to avoid breaking the law.

If in any doubt as to whether a hole is used by pine martens, do not disturb the animals or damage the holes. Consult an expert.



What else may be seen?

Pine martens are sometimes confused with mink (a non-protected species in the UK). However, they differ in that pine martens are slightly larger and live close to water and their droppings smell strongly rancid.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, to prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 21: pest species

Invasive plants

What are they and how are they recognised?

Some plants are so invasive that they have become a problem, particularly to UK native flora. The three species that are most commonly encountered on construction projects are:

Japanese knotweed

This spreads solely by vegetative means as fragments of root or stem as small as 0.7 g may regenerate into new plants. In the spring it emerges from the ground appearing quite reddish at first and grows rapidly so by the summer has normally achieved a height of two to three metres. The leaves are shaped like a shield with a small pointed tip and are 1.5 times longer than they are wide, 10 cm to 15 cm long and are bright green.

Japanese knotweed is not harmful to human health in any way.

Giant hogweed

Unlike Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed produces seed prolifically, as many as 50 000 seeds per plant with them remaining viable for up to 10 years and are readily dispersed. It can take four years for plants of giant hogweed to flower, but when they do they are unmistakable. They can grow up to five metres tall and have large umbels of flowers on top of each stem, rather like a giant version of cow parsley. They should not be mistaken for its cousin the common hogweed, which is a smaller plant.

Giant hogweed is of concern because of its poisonous sap, which can cause blistering of the skin.

Himalayan balsam

An annual plant that grows to about two metres in height and produces purplish-pink slipper shaped flowers in June to August. When mature, the seed pods explode if touched and disperse their seeds over several metres. Seeds may be further spread by being picked and moved by water. It forms dense stands that suppress other



vegetation and can leave river and stream banks bare and vulnerable to erosion.

Where are they found?

Japanese knotweed is especially prevalent on wasteland, along railways and around water bodies, particularly in Wales and the south-west.

Giant hogweed is also found in a range of habitats, but appears to favour wastelands, roadsides and especially waterside situations.

Himalayan balsam prefers damp habitats and may form dense monocultures along river, stream and ditch banks and in damp woodland.

When are they found?

All three plants start to become visible in early spring (March/April) and grow rapidly during the summer. The dead remains persist throughout the winter. Those of Japanese knotweed resemble a reddish brown bamboo.

Toolbox talk 16: protected species

Water vole

What are they and how are they recognised?

Water voles are declining in the UK so are fully protected. They are often confused with rats. Rats are far more common and also less cautious and so are more likely to be seen. Water voles do not pose the same threats to human health as rats. The table summarises both species and the differences between them

Where are they found?

Water voles are found in slow flowing rivers, streams, ditches and around lakes, reed-beds, marshes and ponds with steep banks and plenty of vegetation. They tend to be more active in the day. It is more likely to hear water voles than see them: you can hear a “plop” as they dive into the water. Field signs are mostly found within two to three metres of the water’s edge. They include burrows, pathways, grazed “lawns”, piles of chewed up plants and piles of droppings.

When are they found?

Water voles are active all year, but the animals and their signs are less likely to be seen in winter.

If there is any doubt about the identity of the species that has been found, do not disturb the animals or the holes and consult an expert.



What should be done if a water vole is found?

Water vole burrows are protected against obstruction, damage or destruction. Water voles are protected against killing, injury and disturbance.

If water voles are found after works start, all works must stop immediately to avoid breaking the law.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Feature	Water vole	Brown rat
Appearance	Chestnut brown fur, blunt nose and round face, short rounded ears hidden by fur. Shorter tail.	Brown or black fur, pointed face and prominent eyes and ears. Long, thick hairless tail.
Droppings	Dark green droppings form platforms/piles of droppings.	Light brown droppings scattered in groups.
Burrows and runways	Holes within 2 m of water’s edge, near or below water-line. “Lawns” of grazed vegetation around burrows.	Rat burrows have a fan of excavated soil and are joined by well-worn “rat-runs”.
Behaviour	Mainly active during the day. Shy, rarely seen, hear “plop” as they disappear into water.	Mostly nocturnal but less cautious and more likely to be seen.

Toolbox talk 23: pest species

Rats

What are they and how are they recognised?

Two types of rat are found in the UK: the brown rat (or sewer, field or common rat), and the black (or ship) rat. Both are introduced (non-native) species. The brown rat is the most common and is widespread in urban and rural areas while the black rat is confined mainly to London docklands and other port areas.

Signs that rats are present include signs of gnawing on wooden doors and their droppings, which are light brown and deposited in groups (brown rats) or sausage-shaped and scattered (black rats). Smell rancid.

Rats are frequently confused with water voles because they are seen often in or near water. Water voles are strictly protected by UK law.

Where are they found?

Brown rats live in a wide range of situations, generally close to people (urban areas, refuse tips, sewer systems, farmyards), but are also found in arable fields. Black rats are mainly found in ports or in towns that are linked to ports via canals. Rats live in burrows in open ground, outbuildings, under floorboards etc.

The table summarises the differences between rats and water voles:



If there is in any doubt as to whether what has been found is a rat or a water vole, stop all works immediately and consult an expert.

Feature	Rat	Water Vole
Appearance	Brown, black or grey fur, pointed face and prominent eyes and ears. Long, thick hairless tail.	Chestnut brown fur, blunt and round face, short ears hidden by fur. Shorter furry tail. Rounded nose.
Droppings	Light brown droppings scattered or in groups. Unpleasant odour.	Dark green droppings form platforms/piles of droppings (latrines). Odourless.
Burrows and runways	Rat burrows have a fan of excavated soil and are joined by well-worn "rat-runs".	Holes within 2 m of water's edge, near or below waterline. "Lawns" of grazed vegetation around burrows.
Behaviour	Mostly nocturnal but less cautious and more likely to be seen. Good swimmers.	Mainly active in day. Shy, rarely seen, hear "plop" as they disappear into water.

Summary of the differences between brown rat and black rat:

Feature	Brown Rat (<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>)	Black Rat (<i>Rattus rattus</i>)
Colour	Grey-brown to black	Dark brown, black or grey. Sometimes white underneath
Body length	Up to 280 mm	Up to 240 mm
Tail length	Shorter than head plus body length	Longer than head plus body length

When are they found?

Rats are active and breeding all year round.

What should be done if there are rats on site?

Rats should be killed humanely. If brown rats are found on site, action should be taken immediately as they can rapidly form large colonies and create structural damage to wiring etc as well as endangering human health. If a black rat is captured, then it is illegal to deliberately or accidentally release it

For more information on rat management issues contact: Defra (England), Scottish Executive (Scotland), Welsh Assembly Government (Wales) or Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Northern Ireland).

Health and safety issues

Rats carry Weil's disease (Leptospirosis), which is potentially fatal to humans. Infection can occur via rats' urine, including in streams, ponds etc. Avoid contact with any areas of broken skin and always wash hands before eating.

Measures such as traps and poisons used to control rats will be illegal if they affect protected species such as bats or water voles. Pest control should only be carried out by a registered pest control company. The use of non-approved traps and poisons is illegal.

Toolbox talk 9: protected species

Mammals (common)

What are they and how are they recognised?

The presence on a site of the species listed in the table does not necessarily limit development works, but all mammals in Britain are protected against cruelty – and this includes cruelty as part of the destruction of habitat containing adult or young:

Protected against cruelty

- hedgehog
- shrew (all species)
- polecats
- water voles
- dormice
- deer
- hares
- common rabbits
- stoats
- weasel
- moles.

Also, killing or trapping of all shrew species, hedgehogs or polecats using certain methods is illegal without a licence.

Killing or taking of deer is illegal during the close season.

The use of pesticides, trapping etc is strictly controlled. It is illegal for these methods to affect protected species.

Where are they found?

Many of these species may be found frequently on construction sites in grass, scrub and woodland and under logs and rocks. Some species are frequently associated with buildings.

When are they found?

Adults of hibernating species will be active during spring and summer. They may be found hibernating during the winter months. Non-hibernating species may be found all



(courtesy Vicky White)

year round. Nests containing young may be found between February and October, though some mammals breed all year round.

What should be done if one is found?

Though not specifically protected by law against the effects of development, many of these species are of conservation importance. Some small mammals are highly vulnerable to being injured or killed during vegetation clearance. Where possible care should be taken to protect and remove individuals from danger by following the guidance here:

When using strimmers etc leave grass height at 10 cm where possible. If this cannot be done, cut in two stages, ie leave 10 cm of grass for half a day or more to allow animals to escape, then return and clear to ground level. Avoid areas where the animals occur, or remove animals and nests to safety.

Keep watch for nests of young among long grass etc. Young mammals are typically born blind and without fur and so are particularly vulnerable. Care should be taken at all times of year. Many species breed all year round. Others may be hibernating within grass and scrub. If hibernating animals are found, these should be removed to a safe, dry and well-sheltered place.

If there is any doubt as to the identity of the species that has been found, do not harm or disturb it or damage or obstruct its habitat and consult an expert.

Take care

Common mammals may be found alongside those species such as badgers or dormice that are strictly protected in the UK. Any works that may affect these protected species or places they use for shelter or protection are illegal without a licence.

Toolbox talk 15: protected species

Red squirrels

What are they and how are they recognised?

Red squirrels are up to 240 mm long with a bushy tail. They have large, round, dark eyes and can often be seen sitting upright on their hind legs holding food with their forelegs while nibbling it.

Red squirrels can be distinguished from grey squirrels (which are not protected) by their bright ginger to red or brown fur and their bushier ginger or red tail and large ear tufts. Their coat may be flecked with grey in winter.



Where are they found?

Red squirrels live in large blocks of woodland, including both coniferous and mixed broadleaf, mainly in northern England, Scotland and Ireland, with a few isolated populations in Wales and central and southern England. They are active during the day, but live at low densities and have decreased significantly in numbers since the introduction of the grey squirrel, so sightings are rare.

One of the most obvious signs of red squirrels is their nests, known as dreys. Dreys are spherical, constructed from twigs and lined with soft hair, moss and dried grass. They are usually located more than six metres above ground, next to the main trunk of trees in forks, hollow trunks or branches or near the stem at the base of conifers, but can also be found in bushes.

When are they found?

Squirrels are active during the day all year round, less so during the winter but do not hibernate.

What should be done if a red squirrel is found?

If a red squirrel or its nest site has been found, all works in the area must stop immediately to avoid breaking the law.

It is illegal to injure, kill, capture or disturb a red squirrel, or to damage its nest or their sheltering place. Squirrel nests may be mistaken for bird's nests.

If there is any doubt whether a red squirrel or a grey squirrel has been found, stop all works immediately and consult an expert.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talks: pest species

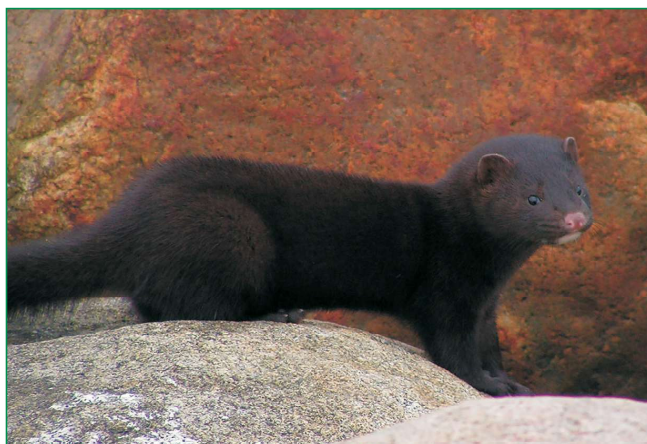
Mink

What are they and how are they recognised?

Mink are an introduced species that affect native wildlife and are controlled by law. However, mink and their dens and droppings may be confused with those of other species such as otters, pine martens and badgers, which are strictly protected in the UK.

Mink have a slender body with a long tail and short legs. They are similar in size to a ferret or a small cat and have a glossy, dark brown to silver coat with white throat patches.

Droppings are left in conspicuous places such as large boulders, tree stumps and close to dens. They are long and thin (up to 80 mm), tightly twisted and smell strongly rancid.



If there is any doubt as to whether what has been found is a grey squirrel or a red squirrel, stop all works immediately and consult an expert. Measures used to control grey squirrels will be illegal if they affect any other protected species, for example red squirrels or bats. Seek expert advice.

Where are they found?

Mink live near fresh water that has dense vegetation cover alongside, such as slow-flowing rivers, ponds, marshes and lakes. They usually have several dens within a territory in places such as hollow trees and logs, tree root cavities, rabbit burrows and rock crevices. The dens are lined with fur, feathers and vegetation.

When are they found?

Mink are nocturnal but can also be seen during the day and are active all year round.

What should be done if one is found?

If a mink is captured, it is illegal to deliberately or accidentally re-release it. It should be humanely killed.

Mink, like all wild mammals, are protected against cruelty. Individuals captured must be humanely killed. If a den containing young mink is found, they must be humanely killed. Killing animals by filling in dens amounts to cruelty and is illegal.

Dens or holes found on site may be used by protected species such as badger, water vole, otter or pine marten. Any works disturbing these species or their habitat are illegal without a licence.

Toolbox talk 7: protected species

Great crested newt

What are they and how are they recognised?

Newts are amphibians – they can live both in water and on land. Adult great crested newts (GCN) are 110-170 mm long (about twice as big as other newts) and are black or dark brown. During spring and summer, males have a jagged crest along the back and the tail has a silver stripe along it. The females do not have the crest or silver tail stripe, but have a bright orange stripe along the bottom of their tail. Both males and females have bright orange bellies with black spots.

Where are they found?

GCN occur in rural, urban and suburban sites. GCN usually prefer medium to large ponds in which to, but can be found in any body of water on site including temporary pools. GCN spend most of their time on land – they can be found in grass, scrub and woodland and under logs and stones within 250 m to 500 m of the breeding pond.

When are they found?

GCN are nocturnal and are seen mostly at night. They are found in ponds between March and June, but can be seen on land at any time of year.

What should be done if a GCN is found?

GCN are fully protected against killing, capture, injury and disturbance, and the places they use for shelter or protection are protected against damage, destruction or obstruction. If a GCN (adult, juvenile or tadpole) is found (or suspected) on site after works have started, all works in the area must stop immediately and expert advice must be sought.

If there is any doubt of the newt species that has been found, stop work and consult an expert.



What else may be seen?

If GCN are found in a pond, common and/or palmate newts may also be found. Common and palmate newts do not receive the same protection as GCN except in Northern Ireland where the common newt is fully protected. Adults of these species are about the same size as young GCN but are a lighter colour.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be held liable.

Toolbox talk 19: pest species

Foxes

What are they and how are they recognised?

Foxes are the size of a small-medium sized dog and have reddish orange fur with a bushy tail. They are slim in build with a long pointed snout. Fox droppings are similar to those of domestic dogs but are twisted in shape, often contain hair and bones, and have a pungent smell.

Where are they found?

Foxes occur in nearly all habitats including sand dunes, marshes, mountain tops and urban areas. They are well adapted to living in built-up areas and may be seen in town centres and gardens. Foxes occupy underground dens called “earths” – these may include old or actively used badger holes.

When are they found?

Foxes are active all year round, less so in the winter, though they do not hibernate and can be seen during the day or at night. Breeding occurs once a year in the spring, with four to five cubs produced per female.

What should be done if one is found?

Cruelty to foxes and the use of poison and certain types of trap to capture them are illegal. If undertaking works that could affect fox dens then:

- avoid destruction until sure that foxes have evacuated
- to avoid breaking the laws protecting animals against cruelty, only lightly fill holes at first to avoid burying any animals and to detect whether the hole is in use. Use leaf litter or straw rather than soil
- avoid filling holes between March and May as cubs may be below ground.



Health and safety issues

Foxes may carry Weil's disease (Leptospirosis), which can be passed on to humans via fox urine. Foxes (like dogs) carry parasites that can cause disease in humans, these are passed on via droppings.

Avoid contact with fox urine or droppings (or any standing water that may be contaminated) with bare hands.

Foxes may use badger holes, and it is illegal to damage badger holes without a licence. If in doubt, stop all works and consult an expert.

Toolbox talk 8: protected species

Invertebrates

What are they and how are they recognised?

There are almost 30 000 species of non-marine invertebrates in the UK, excluding the microscopic species. The most familiar species are those that are regularly seen such as slugs, snails, spiders and flies. Some invertebrate species receive special protection in the UK.

Where are they found?

Invertebrates are likely to occur where a development is proposed, both on greenfield and brownfield sites. The latter are often surprisingly rich, sometimes supporting rare or otherwise notable species. They occur in the soil, among ground vegetation, in trees and shrubs, in fresh water and marine water, in areas of bare ground and at the majority of altitudes and water depths. Even heavily polluted areas can support pollution-tolerant species.

When are they found?

Invertebrates tend to be inactive in the winter, but this varies between species.

What should be done if one is found?

It is illegal to kill, capture or disturb fully-protected species, or to damage or obstruct their habitat. It is also illegal to kill or injure some species. Consult an expert. If protected species of invertebrate are found on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately to avoid breaking the law. Works may need to be delayed until mitigation can be conducted at the appropriate time of year.

If there is any doubt of the species that has been found, stop works immediately and consult an expert.



Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 1: protected species

Amphibians (common)

What are they and how are they recognised?

There are seven native amphibian species in the UK:

- 1 Common toad.
- 2 Common frog.
- 3 Common newt.
- 4 Palmate newt.
- 5 Great crested newt (GNC).
- 6 Natterjack toad.
- 7 Pool frog.

In England, Wales and Scotland the first four species are fairly widespread. In Northern Ireland only the common frog and common newt are found. These widespread species may be found living side-by-side with the fully-protected GNC or (less commonly) the natterjack toad. The pool frog, which was recently re-introduced to a single site in East Anglia, is strictly protected.

Where are they found?

The four widespread amphibian species are frequently encountered on construction sites, both in or around water (including temporary pools) and on land among grass, scrub, woodland and under logs and rocks.

When are they found?

Ponds have the highest numbers of amphibians in the spring, when they are used for breeding, but are still likely to contain lower numbers throughout the year.

Young amphibians remain in the water as tadpoles or larvae until they change into tiny, miniature adults and then move on to land. They can be found on land from April onwards.

Adults and juveniles can also be found on land at any time. Most amphibians hibernate on land during the winter months, though the common frog can also hibernate in mud at the bottom of ponds.



What should be done if one is found?

In England, Wales and Scotland, disturbance of the common frog, common toad, common or palmate newt does not require a licence, but all four species are of conservation concern and they are all protected against cruelty and against sale or trade.

In Northern Ireland the common frog receives protection only against sale etc but the common newt is fully protected.

When conducting works the following should be adhered to where possible:

- protect and remove individuals from danger. Captured animals are legally protected against cruelty
- amphibians, particularly when very young or hibernating, are likely to be injured during vegetation clearance using strimmers etc. Where possible this should be undertaken in autumn when animals are active, but not breeding. Leave grass height at 10 cm where possible.

When clearing sites dismantle all sheltering places, such as rock piles and logs etc, by hand and place any animals in a cool, damp, sheltered place away from danger.

Take particular care in winter – animals may be hibernating within rock-piles and vegetation and are highly vulnerable to killing and injury.

In Northern Ireland, where the common newt is fully protected against killing, capture, injury and disturbance, and the places they use for shelter or protection are protected against damage or destruction, it will be necessary to show that all reasonable effort was made to avoid breaking the law and that adequate surveys have been carried out.

Where common newts are present, mitigation measures should be agreed with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). If a common newt is found (or suspected) on a site in Northern Ireland after works have started, all works must stop immediately and expert advice sought.

If in any doubt about the identity of a species that has been found, do not disturb it as doing so may be illegal. Consult an expert.

What else may be seen?

In England, Wales and Scotland, any of these species can be found in ponds with the GNC or, occasionally, the natterjack toad. Both these species are fully protected. It is illegal to capture, injure, kill or disturb GNC or natterjack toads, or damage or obstruct their habitat.

GNCs are almost twice the size of the smaller species, reaching up to 19 cm.

Natterjack toads have a distinctive yellow stripe running along the length of their back.

“Alien” species

Many non-native amphibians have been introduced into the UK, sometimes as unwanted pets. In some cases, such as the bull frog, introduced species cause great damage to British wildlife and are considered pests.

If a species is found that is not recognised, put them in a cool damp container with some shelter. Seek expert advice from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), an ecologist, a wildlife crime officer, the local reptile and amphibian group or a local zoo. Alien species are not native to the UK and should not be released once captured. All animals are protected against cruelty.

Toolbox talk 3: protected species

Bats

What are they and how are they recognised?

Some species of bat are only as long and wide as a human thumb so can crawl into tiny cracks and crevices in trees, walls, eaves and roofs. They have a small body covered in brown or grey fur on their backs and usually paler beneath, with comparatively large, leathery wings that are folded against the body when roosting. Flying bats appear much larger – their wingspan can be up to 400 mm. Below roost entrances (holes, cracks etc), dark stains or bat droppings may be seen stuck to surfaces or on the ground. Bat droppings are dark brown or black and about a centimetre long. They are similar to mouse droppings, but are softer and crumble up when crushed.

Where are they found?

Bats occur in both rural and urban areas, including woodland, farmland, parks and gardens. They are often seen feeding over a variety of habitats including marshes, lakes, ponds, canals, rivers, hedgerows, woodland and grassland. Bats use many different roosting places for resting, breeding and hibernating including:

- holes and cracks in trees
- roofs and walls of houses and buildings
- under bridges
- underground in caves
- old railway tunnels.

Every building and mature tree is a potential bat roost.

When are they found?

Bats may be found hibernating in caves, buildings or trees from November to March, and possibly in October and April. New-born young and female bats may be found in breeding roosts in buildings and trees from May to September.

If a bat or a bat roost has been found on site, stop all works in the area immediately and consult an expert.



(courtesy Scottish Natural Heritage)

What should be done if a bat or bat roost is found?

If a bat or a bat roost is found stop works immediately and consult an expert. Only licensed bat-workers are legally allowed to enter known bat roosts or to capture or handle bats. It is illegal to injure, kill, capture or disturb a bat, or to damage trees, buildings or other places used for roosting (even if bats are not currently present).

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Damaging or destroying a bat roost – even if not in use at the time – can lead to prosecution. Any vehicle or other items used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 14: protected species

Reptiles

What are they and how are they recognised?

There are six native species of land-dwelling reptile in the UK:

- 1 Common lizards grow up to 135 mm long and are various shades of brown with small bars or spots. Young lizards are black or dark copper. The common lizard is the only native reptile found in Northern Ireland.
- 2 Sand lizards have a stockier build than common lizards and typically grow up to 165 mm long. They are brown, grey or sandy coloured with two light stripes and spots that are black with white centres. Males have bright green sides.
- 3 Slow worms can grow up to 400 mm long. They are legless lizards but look like snakes. Males are various shades of grey or brown, females are brown or copper in colour with dark brown sides. Young slow worms are light silver or gold in colour with darker stripes on the sides and back.
- 4 Adders grow up to 550 mm long. These snakes have a dark-coloured zigzag stripe all the way along their body. The background colour may be grey, rust or sandy coloured.
- 5 Grass snakes can grow up to a length of 750 mm. They are olive-green or grey with small black lines and spots and a yellow or orange collar at the neck. Young snakes look similar to adults.
- 6 Smooth snakes typically grow up to 600 mm long. They are grey or brown with two rows of dark coloured spots or bars down the back. There is a black heart-shape marking on the head.

Where are they found?

Reptiles can be found throughout the UK, including in urban areas, in vegetation on railway embankments, churchyards and in hedgerows, sheltering under logs, rocks and compost heaps, or basking in open sunlight. Typical habitats are dense grassland or scrub with open areas where they can get sunlight. Grass snakes are often seen in or near water but are also found in drier



habitats as are adders. Sand lizards and smooth snakes are very rare and restricted to a few counties in England (sand lizards are also found in north Wales). Those species most likely to be seen are the common lizard and the slow worm.

When are they found?

Reptiles are active during the day in spring, summer and autumn and hibernate in winter. Activity is influenced by weather conditions and temperature. Mating takes place between April and June and young hatch between July and October.

What should be done if a reptile is found on site?

All native reptiles are protected by law throughout the UK. In England, Wales and Scotland, it is illegal to kill or injure common lizards, slow worms, grass snakes and adders. All works that may affect sand lizards and smooth snakes are illegal without a development licence. Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage should be consulted regarding mitigation measures

In Northern Ireland, to avoid prosecution when undertaking development works that will affect common lizards or their habitat, evidence is required that all reasonable effort was made to avoid breaking the law – proof of adequate surveys and mitigation will be needed. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) should be consulted regarding mitigation measures.

What else may be seen?

Several non-native reptiles have been introduced into the UK, sometimes released as unwanted pets. These include the common wall lizard and red-eared terrapin. In some cases, such as the red-eared terrapin, introduced species cause damage to UK wildlife and are considered pests. If these species are found do not let them go again. Release of certain species is illegal. Breaking the law could lead to similar penalties as for protected species. Put the animals in a cool container with some shelter and consult an expert (ie RSPCA, police wildlife liaison officer, local reptile or amphibian group or a local zoo).

If any species of reptile is found on site after development has started, all works in the area should stop immediately to avoid breaking the law. Consult an expert.

If there is any doubt as to which species has been found, stop work and consult an expert.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 17: protected species

White-clawed crayfish

What are they and how are they recognised?

Crayfish look similar to a small lobster and are up to 120 mm long with eight walking legs, a tailfan and two large, slim claws. The white-clawed crayfish is dark brown or olive on top and its claws have a dirty-white or pink underside.

Where are they found?

They can be found sheltering in rock crevices, submerged plants, tree roots and bank undercuts in streams, rivers or canals. They also occur in lakes, reservoirs, quarries, gravel pits and ponds.

When are they found?

White-clawed crayfish are most active between July and September and usually inactive from December to March.

What else may be seen?

There are six non-native species of crayfish that have been introduced to various parts of the UK and share similar habitats to white-clawed crayfish. Some of these species have contributed to the decline of the white-clawed crayfish through the spread of a disease known as “crayfish plague”.

Finding other species of crayfish

If an introduced species of crayfish has been captured, then it should not be released.

Individuals captured must be killed humanely – cruelty to any crayfish species is illegal.



(courtesy Victoria Forder)

If a white-clawed crayfish is found on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately as it is illegal to take (ie capture) or sell a white-clawed crayfish. Accidental capture can easily occur during dredging works.

If there is in any doubt as to the identity of the species that has been found, do not disturb the animals. Consult an expert.

Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially prison sentences of up to six months. Accidentally capturing a white-clawed crayfish can lead to prosecution. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talk 20: pest species

Grey squirrels

What are they and how are they recognised?

Grey squirrels are up to 300 mm long plus a long bushy tail. Their fur is grey with a brown or reddish tint in places and have large round dark eyes. They may be mistaken for red squirrels, though red squirrels are much redder, and much rarer.

Grey squirrels are slightly larger than red squirrels, their ears are more rounded and they don't usually have the long pointy ear tufts red squirrels have. The main difference is the colour of their fur. Squirrels are often seen sitting upright on their hind legs, nibbling food, which they hold in their forelegs

Grey squirrels are an introduced species and are not protected. Red squirrels are rare and strictly protected in the UK.

Where are they found?

Grey squirrels occur in a wide range of habitats, from rural deciduous and mixed woodland and hedgerow to urban parks, gardens and roadsides. They are often seen on the ground and in trees. Nests are built among the branches of large trees, away from the main trunk, and also in roof spaces of buildings. Squirrel nests or "dreys" are round and compact, 300 mm to 600 mm across, made of twigs and leaves, lined with grass and dry leaves, and may be mistaken for birds' nests.

When are they found?

Grey squirrels are active during the day all year round, less so in winter, but they do not hibernate.

What should be done if one is found?

Although not protected against killing, injury or disturbance, grey squirrels are protected against cruelty, like all wild mammals. If a grey squirrel is captured, then it is illegal to deliberately or accidentally release it. It should be humanely killed.



If there is any doubt as to whether what has been found is a grey squirrel or a red squirrel, stop all works immediately and consult an expert. Measures used to control grey squirrels will be illegal if they affect any other protected species, for example red squirrels or bats. Seek expert advice.

Toolbox talk 6: protected species

Fish

What are they and how are they recognised?

There are about 50 species of freshwater fish in the UK, and many more marine species. Certain fish species receive special protection in the UK.

Where are they found?

Fish can be found in ponds, streams, lakes and rivers. The eggs of fish may be found attached to vegetation or buried in gravel and under rocks.

When are they found?

Fish are active all year round. Most species deposit eggs in spring or summer, but some breed during the winter months.

What should be done if one is found?

It is illegal to poison or injure fish, their spawning grounds, spawn or food by polluting water – this makes it illegal to allow any waste (including large amounts of cut vegetation) to enter watercourses without a licence.

Waterways must be safeguarded against pollution to avoid breaking the law. The environmental regulator must be consulted before undertaking any works on watercourses.

If a protected species of fish, its spawn or its shelter is found (or suspected) on site after works have started, works in the area must stop immediately. It is illegal to injure, kill, capture or disturb certain fish species, or to damage a place they use for shelter or protection.

If in any doubt as to which species has been found, stop work immediately and consult an expert.



Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Toolbox talks: protected species

Hazel dormice

What are they and how are they recognised?

Dormice are small, orange-brown rodents with a white belly and a furry tail. Their body is about 60 mm to 90 mm long plus tail. They have large black eyes and round ears. The fat (or 'edible') dormouse is an introduced species found in southern and central England. It is grey and larger in size. Always consult an expert to confirm the species of dormouse that has been found. This toolbox talk deals with the dormouse, or more correctly the hazel dormouse, only.

It is illegal to injure, kill, capture, or disturb a dormouse, or to damage its nests or any place it uses for shelter or protection. If a dormouse or its nest has been found, stop works in the area immediately and consult an expert.



Penalties

Breaking the law can lead to fines of up to £5000 per offence and, potentially, prison sentences of up to six months. Any vehicle used to commit the offence may be forfeited. Both the company and/or individuals can be held liable.

Where are they found?

Dormice typically live in well-established, broad-leaved woodland and thick hedges where there is plenty of ground cover. However, they are also now being found in other types of woodland, for example coniferous woodland, and in scrub. Dormice are nocturnal, spend most of their time above ground in trees and shrubs and live in very low numbers, so sightings are rare. It is more likely that signs, including nests and nibbled hazelnuts, are seen than the animals themselves.

Nests are up to 150 mm wide, round and woven out of grasses and leaves. They may be found within scrub and trees, in hedgerows and tree holes, and sometimes in buildings. Winter hibernation nests are often at ground level under leaf litter, wood-piles or rocks.

When are they found?

Dormice are only active between May and early October, but nests may be found all year round.